

DCS Commissioner Announces New Division of Juvenile Justice
Miller Takes Aim To Improve Care For Delinquents, Address Judges' Concerns

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Tennessee Department of Children's Services Commissioner Viola P. Miller today announced the formation of a new Division of Juvenile Justice to strengthen the agency's management and care of delinquent youths in state custody. Miller named former judge and DCS general counsel Steven C. Hornsby as deputy commissioner to lead the division.

"Nearly a month ago, I began to meet with juvenile judges from across the state to hear their concerns and feedback regarding DCS's management of delinquent youths in the state's custody," said Miller. "I have taken their concerns seriously and given thoughtful consideration to the ways we can work together to address the needs and concerns of this unique population."

"Given the volume and the scope of issues and clients that this department addresses," Miller added, "I feel strongly that the development of a division whose primary focus is on how we handle delinquent youths is the best way to address the issues we share with juvenile justice judges across the state."

In his new role as deputy commissioner of the Division of Juvenile Justice, Hornsby will oversee services and care for the more than 2,000 delinquent children and adolescents in state custody. Hornsby is one of three deputy commissioners within DCS. Also reporting to Miller, Deputy Commissioner Bonnie Hommrich oversees protection and prevention for the agency, and Deputy Commissioner Thomas Riche is responsible for the department's administration and training.

"Steve has been consistent throughout his legal career in his commitment to Tennessee's children and the improvement of their care. I am pleased to acknowledge this commitment by appointing him as deputy commissioner of juvenile justice," said Miller. "I have asked Steve to work with key internal and external stakeholders to develop recommendations that will best address the needs of our state's children, families and communities through this new division. I have asked him to report back to me in 90 days with these recommendations."

In response to his appointment, Hornsby stated, "As a former juvenile judge and having served as legal counsel for the Department of Children's Services, I fully understand the concerns of the department and juvenile judges regarding the treatment of delinquent children and adolescents and the safety of our communities. I am also confident the decision to more acutely focus on juvenile matters is a thoughtful and judicious one."

Commissioner Miller and Deputy Commissioner Hornsby plan to meet quarterly with groups of judges around the state. The first of these meetings will be in Hamilton County at the request of Judge Suzanne Bailey.

"Commissioner Miller has shown unrelenting effort and dedication in addressing the problems at DCS since she began leading the department 15 months ago," said Governor Bredesen. "I have complete support and confidence in her decision to create a Division of Juvenile Justice within the department and in her decision to appoint Steve Hornsby to lead the new division. Steve is uniquely qualified for this position based on his years of service as a juvenile court judge and also his on-going efforts to address pressing children's issues in the state."

Hornsby served as general sessions and juvenile court judge of Hardeman County for 13 years. While on the bench, he served on the Executive Committee of TCJFCJ for six years. In March 2003, Governor Phil Bredesen appointed Hornsby to the Children's Cabinet, an executive-level work group that focuses on improving services to children in Tennessee. In August 2003, Hornsby retired from the bench and became special assistant to the Commissioner Miller. In April 2004, Miller named him general counsel for the department. In 2004, Hornsby was named the 2004 recipient of the McCain-Abernathy Award, an honor given by the TCJFCJ annually to current or former judges who have demonstrated dedication and commitment to improving the juvenile court system and achieving better outcomes for children.

Commissioner Miller named Stacy Miller to replace Hornsby as the department's new general counsel. In this position, she will oversee the legal division of DCS, which is composed of 117 attorneys and support staff who are located across the state.

Stacy Miller joined the Department of Children's Services in 1999 as a staff attorney. From 1999-2002, she served as DCS director of legal services and was subsequently promoted to supervising attorney for the department. Miller then joined the Administrative Office of the Courts for the State of Tennessee before rejoining DCS as deputy general counsel in April 2004.

The Tennessee Department of Children's Services was created in 1996 through legislation to provide the best possible care for children and youths in state custody, or those at risk of entering custody, and their families. Services provided by DCS include child protective services, foster care, adoption, programs for delinquent youths, probation/aftercare, and treatment and rehabilitation programs for identified youths. DCS's Web site is. <http://www.state.tn.us/youth/>

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